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Return of the Raiders?

Big R&D Budget Brings Pork-Barrel Warning

Are pork-barrel raiders from the scruffier precincts of academe now bivouacked in the Washington woods, casing the plump budget that the Administration has proposed for academic science? Is a replay in the works for last year's astonishing flurry of crafty Congressional favors for individual schools seeking new laboratories and other buildings (SGR Vol. XIII, Nos. 10, 19)?

That seems to be the worried perception in and around the high-rent suites of the elite institutions that long ago established Washington outposts to assure their own proper share of the federal bundle. With a unanimity customarily reserved for clamoring for more federal money, they last year belted out condemnatory resolutions of suspiciously similar wording—all to the effect that academic institutions should not take to Capitol Hill in selfish pursuit of labs and research money.

Leading the pack was the Association of American Universities, Washington lobbyist for 50 big research universities. It was joined by the American Physical Society, and the National Academy of Sciences, and drowsily followed months later by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Reverential toward peer review as the device for deciding who gets what, they warned that pork-barreling would sow cynicism and interfere with wise allocation of scientific resources.

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With all that institutional artillery directed at the honorable American custom of hustling for goodies on Capitol Hill, it might be assumed that the scavenging forces would be shamed away, but fears persist that they're merely waiting to strike, and that this time there are many more of them lurking out there.

That's the message from one of the leading apparatchiks of the Washington science-policy establishment, Philip M. Smith, Executive Officer of the National Academy of Sciences, formerly of high staff rank in the White House Science Office and the National Science Foundation. Speaking March 30 to the ninth annual AAAS review of the federal R&D budget, Smith observed that the budget contains "a series of proposals for engineering centers, expanded biotechnology, and super computer programs that present themselves as attractive candidates for pork-barrel activity.

"An impressionistic survey obtained by discussing the matter with Washington representatives of university associations and professional societies," he continued, "suggests to me that individual campuses and consortia of universities are actively studying ways to use hired consultants to help them with their proposals to acquire these prizes." Smith said that so far, there's been no overt renewal of last year's lobbying. But he noted that "a staff aide to the Speaker of the House who was central to last year's campaign" has joined the Washington lobbying firm of Schlossberg-Cassidy and Associates, masters of the coup that won last-minute floor appropriations for labs at Columbia University and the

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In Brief

Who's dominating the making of government rules about science and secrecy in universities? The focal point is at the Pentagon and it's located on the policy rather than the research side. The key figures are hardliner Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy Richard Perle and his grim sidekick, Stephen D. Bryen, a political scientist. The Pentagon's Chief of Research and Engineering, Richard D. DeLauer, doesn't like what's going on, but hasn't been able to stop it. The White House Science Office seems happily remote from this messy issue, though Science Adviser Keyworth, in response to questions at public meetings, says he's opposed to imposing security restrictions on academic science.

Meanwhile, a showdown unwanted by all the parties is shaping up over DoD's insistence on veto rights over publication of the small sliver of Defense-supported academic research that it deems "sensitive." The presidents of Caltech, MIT, and Stanford have written to DoD they won't accept contracts with those terms. But, since the Pentagon needs the schools and the schools need the money, there is mutual interest in a peaceful way out. The academic chiefs, though writing about a matter of intense interest to their professional community, have so far declined to make their letter public.

A six-month extension has been given to the National Academy of Sciences committee that's preparing a report on the Atmospheric Effects of Nuclear Explosions—a subject of wide interest following forecasts of "nuclear winter" after a nuclear war. The study, supported by the Defense Nuclear Agency, is now scheduled for completion in August.

. . . Need Seen for Special Building Funds

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Catholic University of America. (Payment was later blocked by hastily erected bureaucratic barriers at the Department of Energy, whose R&D budget was the prey in this game.)

"It is really too early tell whether the academic pork-barrel is dead or whether it will be back this year or in the future," Smith said. But, to inter it and keep it there, he suggested that consideration be given to a number of organizational changes designed to reinforce the status quo and also deflate the have-nots' discontent by providing some new money.

Thus, Smith said that "university scientists could recognize that the traditional system of scientific community consultation and peer review of proposals for facilities has worked well. They could suggest to their campus administrations and to officials in Washington that maintaining the older system would be a good idea."

For a more direct response to the pork-barrel movement, Smith recommended resumption of something resembling a federal facilities support program, for which NSF provided $100 million in 1968. Another possibility would be setting aside some slice of research funds to finance the construction of facilities.

Finally, Smith even raised the heretical possibility—"for the sake of policy discussion"—of including "the pork-barrel system of research-facility support as a new procedure [on which there should be] an honest and open debate about the process and its implications. If, as a new system of support it has merit of its own, it should be a process utilized by all—university and public officials alike—with a thorough understanding of all the pros and cons."

The shortcoming in Smith's first proposition is that there's no such thing as "the traditional system." And, even if there could be agreement on what it might be, the planting of federally funded R&D facilities on this or that part of the American landscape produces many ripple effects that have little or nothing to do with the quality of science inside those buildings. The 1985 budget's "attractive candidates for pork-barrel activity" that Smith referred to could do a lot of educational and economic good for barren regions. If their sitings were up for political grabs, political rough and tumble would determine their location. But in the present situation, a myth of immaculate conception envelopes the system while, in fact, blatant or subtle horsetrading opportunities are available in Congress for those who seek them.

As for his other recommendations, the scientific establishment has long been seeking a return to earmarked federal money for laboratory construction, but it is not likely to support set-asides for this purpose from sacred basic research funds. Nor is there likely to be major support, in or out of Congress, for putting pork-barreling right out there on the public agenda. Many activities of one sort or another are known to exist, but

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Sharing the NIH $ Pie

It's an old and easily explained story that a relatively small number of institutions get a huge chunk of the money that the federal goverment provides for research in universities. But the actual numbers can be startling, as can be seen in newly compiled figures for the extramural program of the National Institutes of Health.

In fiscal 1983, when the extramural budget totaled $3.2 billion, 25 universities shared 39 percent of that sum, and 100 universities got about 75 percent of it. Over the years, there was some coming and going among the institutions on the charmed lists, but the proportions changed very little. NIH reports that from 1972 to 1983, the share of the top 25 ranged from 37 to 40 percent of the extramural budget. There was similarly little change in the share of the top 100.

The top 10 in NIH extramural receipts in 1983 were the following (in millions):

Johns Hopkins, $73.3; Harvard, $69.3; UC San Francisco, $68.9; Yale, $66.7; Stanford, $66.2; U. of Washington, $66.1; UCLA, $63.5; Columbia, $63.4; U. of Pennsylvania, $63.3; Yeshiva, $51.1.

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. . . The "Haves" Can Afford the High Road

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just aren't talked about publicly.

The piety that emanates from the beneficiaries of the present system of distributing research funds is par for the course in such matters. They rarely, if ever, engage in squalid lobbying techniques, nor do they ever do anything sneaky—such as having a friendly Congressman get them money when legislative attention is diverted. But they're so well set up in Washington that they can afford to take the high road.

The great strength they possess is access to information in the federal labyrinth. The Association of American Universities serves as eyes and ears for its constitutents, as do several other major associations of higher education institutions. But some of these schools, wanting even more specific information, station their own representatives in Washington, or have them commuting in and out with frequency. Others pay heavily for lobbyists to do the job.

These services all provide much of the same stuff—advance word about coming programs at the research-supporting agencies, names of the key people, deadline information, clues about successful application writing. It's the kind of stuff that's gathered by making the rounds in person, by swapping gossip over lunch, and by having helpful acquaintances in the right places.

The money that the federal government puts into academic science is perhaps the most uncontaminated money coming out of Washington. The system, nonetheless, is heavily skewed in favor of those who got in early and who therefore have the resources to be informed and quick about getting more.

Smith sought to debunk the gripes of the have-nots, but in doing so, he clearly registered their case: "It is argued by those who have advocated the novel pork-barrel process that emerged last year that the existing system of support for facilities is not working," he said. They contend, he went on,

- "That the peer-review system is biased toward those who are the haves.
- "The have-nots cannot break into the action because they are unable to get themselves to a sufficient state of excellence wherein they can successfully compete.
- "It is not a democratically fair process; lobbying is the way our pluralistic system works best."

There is, of course, no champion on Capitol Hill for subverting a system that has dubbed itself both pure and essential to national well being. But neither is there a stampede to embrace the establishment's much-revered peer-review system, especially when peer review varies widely from one federal agency to another, and plays a minor role in several major ones, including agricultural research. And, as Smith noted in connection with a matter that is the subject of much chortling in Washington science circles, "some observers lay this outbreak of institution-oriented lobbying at the door of the Administration itself." The reference, he made clear, was to the singlehanded move by peer-review worshipping George A. Keyworth II, Science Adviser to the President, to set up a $260 million National Center For Advanced Materials at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory. It's since been truncated to a mere Center for Advanced Materials following Congressional insistence on retro-peer-reviews of the venture.

Nonetheless, Congress doesn't appear to be ready to rule R&D pork-barreling out of bounds. In February Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Wisc.) and Rep. Larry Winn Jr. (R-Kans.) introduced a resolution (H. Con. Res. 257) that comes close to canonizing peer review as "the touchstone for awarding Federal funds for scientific research projects and facilities . . . . " As of April 10, the resolution had attracted 12 co-sponsors.

Last year's pork-barrel episodes proved embarrassing to some of science's carefully cultivated friends in Congress, among them Chairman Don Fuqua (D-Fla.), of the House Science and Technology Committee, who saw his authority usurped by behind-the-scenes deals that suddenly blossomed on the floor. Fuqua and Speaker O'Neill then informally agreed to close the gates to R&D facility funds that hadn't come through the conventional course of favorable agency review and Congressional committee approval.

That deal has greatly pleased the science establishment in Washington, but there is little basis for confidence about its durability. Very little in the federal budget is exempt from constituent pressures and Congressional horsetrading. Given the great economic value that communities now attach to the presence of high-tech facilities, it is not likely that the disposition of these prizes will be left to the mysterious operations of something known as the peer-review system. The pork-barrelers haven't packed up and gone away. They're just studying the opportunities. —DSG

NAE Elects Officers

H. Guyford Stever, former White House Science Adviser and NSF Director, has been elected Foreign Secretary of the National Academy of Engineering.

Alexander Flax, President emeritus of the Institute for Defense Analyses, has been elected Home Secretary. Elected to the NAE Council were: H. Norman Abramson, Southwest Research Institute; Gerald P. Dinneen, Honeywell, Inc., and Paul E. Gray, MIT.

Stephen Bechtel, Chairman of the Bechtel Group, Inc., was reelected Chairman; Ralph Landau, of Stanford University, was reelected Vice President, and Mildred S. Dresselhaus, of MIT, was reelected to a three-year Council term.

Congress Frowns at Skimpy NIH Budget

The Senate Subcommittee for medical-research funding has joined its House counterpart in informal assurances that Capitol Hill will provide the growth that the White House didn't budget for the National Institutes of Health.

The Administration's NIH request for Fiscal 1985 is for $4.566 billion, which, being only $89 million over the current budget, is scorned by NIH and its dependents as a backsliding budget. They've been making the lobbying rounds in quest of repeating last year's spectacular achievement—a $400-million addition to the President's budget. And at the most vital junctures in the financial process, the appropriations subcommittees, they were looking for, and got, favorable signs.

Delivery on such assurances has become routine in the traditional script of Presidential stinginess for NIH in expectation of Congressional generosity. But with deficit politiking now raging in Congress, open expressions of sympathy for specific items of federal spending are especially precious as the legislators compete for glory as budget choppers. The NIH received such assurances from its House Appropriations Subcommittee last month. And it got another helping on April 3 at the annual budget hearing before the Senate Approprations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education.

In the Congressional tradition of reverence for the warriors against disease, Chairman Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (R-Conn.) greeted NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden and his entourage with sad tales of illness and death. Weicker cited the recent death of the Connecticut educator, "my dear friend, Homer Babbage, who died at 58." And the Senator recalled that "an intern in my office died of cancer at 17 years of age."

Shifting from solemnity to scorn, Weicker then noted that the 2 percent increase that the Administration would allow NIH in the fiscal year that begins next October 1 would eliminate 272 new and competing research projects from Bethesda's portfolio. And he said to Wyngaarden, "Welcome, I don't envy you your task in presenting this budget to the Committee."

The fragility of humankind being well known to the managers of NIH, the Chairman's remarks simply served as a signal to his fellow Senators that he wanted preferred treatment for NIH. Perhaps because of this notice, or possibly for other reasons, not even that indefatigable economizer, William Proxmire, of Wisconsin, the ranking Democrat on the Subcommmittee, took off after the NIH budget.

Wyngaarden stayed within the bounds of Adminstration edicts against Executive Branch managers openly courting extra funds in Congressional testimony. His prepared statement for the Subcommittee said the President's budget "represents a realistic level of Federal support for biomedical research and training." He added that the budget "emphasizes support for basic research" by, among other means, providing funds for a 5-percent increase in the average cost of grants. And, he stated that the budget "reflects the Administration's commitment—even in a time of constrained resources—to a vigorous program of biomedical research and training."

With Weicker in the chair, there was no need for the NIH management to shout its dismay about the budget or express its fears that traditional Congressional generosity toward biomedical research might be crimped by the attack on the deficit. Weicker, obviously attuned to NIH's concerns about the 1985 budget, easily drew from Wyngaarden a matter-of-fact projection about the effects that the Presidential budget would have on NIH's ability to support worthy research projects. The Senator recalled a speech in which the NIH Director had said that it would be desirable for NIH to be able to finance 45 percent of the projects approved by the peer-review system. In response to questions, Wyngaarden said the support level was only 37.5 percent last year; that it was down to 33-34 percent this year, and that, under the Reagan budget, it would drop to 30 percent next year.

"It will eliminate some very good projects?" Weicker asked. Wyngaarden answered, "Yes."

Questions about how much additional money would be needed to keep all research and training activities at current levels finally produced a figure of $360 million—which is in the neighborhood of last year's Congressional add-on to the President's NIH budget.

Senator Mark Andrews (R-ND) used most of his questioning time to extoll the cholesterol-lowering powers of muffins made with hard spring wheat bran—a product supplied to him, he said, by the Department of Agriculture's Human Nutrition Laboratory in his state. The muffins, said Andrews, had lowered his own cholesterol reading by 20 percent, but, he pointed out, he had heard of declines of 50 percent. Wyngaarden, noncommittal on the therapeutic value of hard spring wheat bran muffins, thanked Andrews for a sack of the bran and a recipe that the Senator sent him last year.

Andrews then got down to serious matters and drew from Wyngaarden a forecast that under the Administration's budget, "the pace of research will be somewhat slower." Andrews also drew out that the Administration's 1985 budget would require NIH to drop 588 full-time equivalent employes from its approximately 13,000 intramural employes. The cuts would be apportioned among researchers and service employes, Wyngaarden testified. Traineeships would be reduced under the 1985 budget, he said, from 9863 this year to about 9000, adding that "we can sustain this reduction for a year or

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Europe Ponders US Bid on Space Station

London. Western Europe is going to have a difficult time making up its mind about NASA's invitation to become a shareholder in the space-station program that President Reagan announced in January. The Europeans, at loggerheads politically and yet to emerge from the recession, are unsure of what's being offered and whether they want it. So, at least several months of introspection and argument lie ahead as Europe weighs the offer.

The January announcement was followed by a 10-day sales trip in which NASA Administrator James M. Beggs and an entourage of senior associates sought partners for the venture in London, Paris, Rome, Bonn, and Tokyo. Beggs said the US hopes that Europe and Japan will provide $2 billion of the $8 billion that the space station is expected to cost. In return, he said, the foreign partners could help design the station and have permanent access to it for research and commercial purposes, among which manufacturing in zero gravity is held out as a major attraction.

Beggs demonstrated sympathy for Europe's interest in preserving an independent capability in space technology. He said the US has an open mind about design options, and if Europe is interested in signing on, one of the items for consideration would be docking compatibility for the European Space Agency's Ariane launch vehicle. That would preclude a US Space Shuttle monopoly on traffic to and from the station.

With budget-strained Europe sensitive about what it got for the $750 million it spent on a one-shot use of the Spacelab that it built for the Shuttle, Beggs said that participating countries would have access to the whole space station—not just the bits they financed or built.

"America has no monopoly on brains," Beggs modestly conceded in an interview, and added, "We want to involve in this project the world community."

The Beggs' sales drive was accorded personal audiences by President Mitterrand of France and prime minsters Craxi of Italy and Nakasone of Japan. However, it didn't fare too well in Britain, which is watching its R&D pennies, even to the point of possibly pulling out of high-energy physics collaboration with its European partners at CERN. In London, the NASA team was slightly miffed at seeing only junior ministers and unenthusiastic civil servants.

The prospective partners—including Japan and Canada—seem to have three choices:

• For cash up front, they can get in on the project at the design stage, which means an opportunity to influence design of the station and to get off to a fast start in exploiting technological spinoffs. NASA officials say that if foreign shareholders come in at the very beginning, design of materials, components, and systems could be contracted to individual countries.

• Under the "cold feet" option, foreign partners wouldn't come into the project until NASA had settled on a design. Europe might then sign up for providing a module of its own design to fit onto the core of the US station. Such a module might be along the lines of the Italian-German "Columbus" project, which is examining the possibility of transforming the Spacelab module into a free-flying orbiting base. One approach to the cold feet option calls for Europe and NASA to set up an arrangement for regularly conferring over the next few years, pending a final decision on whether to join forces. During that waiting period, Europe wouldn't have to come up with any money.

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NIH Budget

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two."

"Are you eating the seed corn?" Andrews asked.

Wyngaarden didn't disagree.

Proxmire did take part in the hearing, but as is often the case, he was reflecting the concerns of Wisconsin's dairy industry. He wanted to know why NIH had recently pronounced on the value of drugs for lowering cholesterol levels, but hadn't said anything about dietary opportunities. Wyngaarden replied that "serious dietary manipulation" might be required to produce good results, and expressed doubt about the value of "pure dietary control."

Noting that "Wisconsin is a great dairy state," Proxmire proceeded to inquire whether NIH was conducting clinical trials on diet and cholesterol—a relationship whose uncertainties have been hurting milk and butter sales. Wyngaarden referred the question to the Director of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, Claude Lenfant, who said a proper study "would cost over $1 billion." That squelched the Senator's interest in diet, cholesterol and NIH, and he turned to another line of questioning: Which of the NIH institutes was "most cost-effective in extending life expectancy?"—a question that could be either innocent or a wedge for troublemaking in NIH affairs.

Wyngaarden, who has evolved into a smooth witness-chair performer since becoming Director two years ago, gently replied that the Heart and Cancer institutes were most involved with life-threatening diseases, while the others dealt mainly with "the amelioration of suffering." The Dental Institute, Wyngaarden noted, did valuable work in the latter category.

Proxmire then asked what NIH was doing to hold down indirect-costs on research grants. Wyngaarden said NIH had tried in fiscal 1983 and 1984 by proposing to pay only 90 percent of indirect costs, but had been overruled by Congress.

. . . Germans Eager for Partnership Role

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▪ The third option is for Europe to stay out of the project altogether. The rationale could be either that the space station isn't worth building or that, even if it is, Europe is technologically and politically better off with a self-contained space program independent of the US's far greater prowess.

At this point, a mixture of options one and two seems to be the most likely outcome. The strongest support for coming in on the ground floor is in Germany, which put up more than half of the money that the 11 nations of the European Space Agency spent on Spacelab. As a result, the firms that did most of the work in Germany—mainly MBB and Erno—are clamoring for projects to keep their engineering teams together. Furthermore, civil servants in Germany's Ministry of Research and Technology share NASA's confidence in a bright future for manufacturing in space.

Germany is committed to spending about $150 million on its own Spacelab mission next year and is planning a similar venture in 1988. While industrialists in other nations are indifferent or skeptical about processing in space, the subject has caught on in Germany. Thus, Wacker is interested in space-based production of crystals; Krupp in metals; Bayer in chemicals, and M.A.N. in alloys for engine parts.

Germany is pushing its European partners to get in on the space station at the very beginning. "If we want real participation," an official at the Ministry of Research and Technology said, "it is imperative that we become involved at the study phase. Otherwise, NASA will just go off in its own direction."

France, which spends about $600 million a year on space technology—roughly half of Europe's total spending in this area—appears more interested in using a space station than in helping to build it. But the expectation is that the French will back the German line. Italy is likely to do the same, because of its ties with Germany on the Columbus project. Among the big European nations, Britain is the least interested. It has pinned its space policy on building communications satellites and lacks expertise and money to support anything else.

The Europeans want certain assurances before they get involved with the space station program. First, there will have to be guarantees of equal access to any hardware that Europe develops. Politicians and the European space bureaucracy are still sore about the 1973 deal under which ownership of the European-built Spacelab went to the US after the first flight. Europe has no guaranteed access after that, and is required to pay to use the facility that it built with its own money.

Europe also wants assurances that the US will not subject the program to the budgetary ups and downs that have so often afflicted NASA—though it's generally understood that there's no way of guaranteeing that the next Congress or a new President might not have second thoughts about the costly space station program. Nevertheless, American fickleness toward its presumed colleagues in space research is another sore point in the Old World. It's well-remembered here that one of the first acts of the Reagan Administration was to drop out of the international solar polar mission—a cooperative venture for which NASA had originally urged European collaboration.

The Europeans are also worried about the growing US obsession with technology transfer and the erratic policies that have ensued in Washington from the conflict between the forces for salesmanship and for security. Of particular concern is the Reagan Administra-

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NSF Finally Fills a Post

The White House has finally caught, cleared, and announced a nominee for one of those inexplicably long-vacant senior posts at the National Science Foundation, that of Assistant Director for Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences. It's David T. Kingsbury, Scientific Director of the Naval Biosciences Laboratory and Professor of Medical Microbiology at UC Berekely.

Kingsbury was formerly on the faculty at UC Irvine and in 1978-79 was a visiting scientist at the Laboratory of Central Nervous System Studies at the National Institutes of Health.

The NSF post was formerly held by Eloise Clark, who was dismissed, along with several others, by NSF Director Edward Knapp when he took office in November 1982. Knapp said he wanted his "own team." Robert Rabin currently holds the job on an acting basis.

Kingsbury's arrival date has not been announced, nor is there any word on appointments of a Deputy Director or three other assistant directors for vacancies that have existed for well over a year at NSF.

The long delays in filling the jobs has stirred lots of speculation. The most plausible is that the delays have been caused by a combination of administrative sloth at the White House Office of Personnel Management, the notoriously slow pace of FBI checks for relatively minor positions, and a scarcity of willing candidates.

What's certain is that the publicity-obsessed White House didn't put its first team on this one. The official announcement of the appointment located Kingsbury at "the University of Southern California (Berkeley)."

In Print: NSF, Congress Reviews of R&D

Two new publications from NSF's prolific statistics shop:

Federal R&D Funding by Budget Function, Fiscal Years 1983-85, 82 pages, especially valuable for tracking the big changes that the Reagan Administration has made in R&D priorities; charts show, for example, defense R&D rising from $24.9 billion in FY '83 to $36.9 billion proposed for next year; in same period, health research went from $4.2 billion to $4.9 billion, while energy research declined from $2.5 billion to $2.4.

Federal R&D Funding, The 1975-85 Decade, 29 pages, less detailed than the above publication, provides a decade-long overview of major directions in federal R&D support.

(Both available without charge from National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Studies, 1800 G St. NW., Washington, DC 20550.)

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Research and Development Funding in the Proposed Fiscal Year 1985 Budget, report of the Congressional Budget Office, a basic document of the bubble-will-burst school of civilian R&D funding, says that programs now gestating assure that defense and space will take increasing shares of federal R&D spending; purchasing power (in 1982 dollars) for health research, for example, is seen as slipping from $4.3 billion next year to $3.9 billion at the end of this decade; the forecast for general science (most of which is in NSF) drops from $1.9 to $1.8 billion over that same period.

(85 pages, no charge, Congressional Budget Office, House Annex 2, Second and D Sts. SW., Washington, DC 20515; tel. 202/226-2600).

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Corporate 500: The Directorate of Corporate Philanthropy, provides the basics for applying to this increasingly important sector of research support; included are firms that make direct grants as well as those that operate through corporate foundations; listings for each cover areas of interest, eligibility for support, program officers, application procedures, etc.

(Scheduled to be available this month, about 1000 pages, softbound, $225 prepublication, then $245. Gale Research Co., Book Tower, Detroit Michigan, 48226.)

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Teacher Shortage in Science & Mathematics: Myths, Realities & Research, proceedings of a two-day conference held in February 1983 by the National Institute of Education, concludes, after 277 pages of discussion, that "The shortage of qualified mathematics and science teachers is an important problem that merits immediate expenditures and action."

(Available without charge from National Institute of Education, Teaching and Instruction Division, Mail Stop 5, 1200 19th St. NW., Washington, DC 20208; tel. 202/254-5407.)

Space Station

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tion's depiction of Europe as a technological sieve. Would collaboration on the space station get tangled up in those problems? During his visit to London, NASA Administrator Beggs acknowledged that the export-control issue might present difficulties, but he said he was confident that they could be dealt with in ways that would satisfy all parties.

Finally, Europe has to work out its own political difficulties. Everyone agrees that for the space station, bilaterals are out and that the reply to the US invitation must be on a European-wide basis through the European Space Agency.

But the space station invitation comes at a time when the European Economic Community is not in especially good political health. While some progress has been made toward resolving the chronic farm subsidy problem that almost pulled the EEC to pieces recently, conditions seem far from favorable for a grand European gesture in space. It will take some time for Europe to sort out its priorities and develop a response to NASA's invitation.—Peter Marsh.

(The author covers European technology for the *Financial Times* of London.)

To the Editor

In response to "US Lags in Monitoring Research in Other Countries" (SGR Vol. XIV, No. 5):

The Department of Energy conducts an active program of monitoring foreign research. DOE has Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with a number of industrialized countries, providing for the exchange of summaries of energy-related research as reported in the national literature. The research summaries are exchanged via magnetic tape in a standardized format to optimize machine interrogation . . . In addition hard copy R&D reports are required of foreign signatories.

Present MOU signatory countries include the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, with negotiations in progress with Japan, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Your readers who desire additional information are invited to contact me.

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Indirect-Cost Study Slips from Sight

What's happening in response to that recent General Accounting Office report that posed nasty questions about the big chunk of NIH research money that's siphoned off for indirect costs (SGR Vol. XIV, No. 6)?

The answer from NIH is that the head of its parent agency, Margaret M. Heckler, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), has asked the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to look into the subject. So she did, in a letter to OSTP in mid-February, while the GAO report was under pre-publication review within the Executive Branch. NIH Director James B. Wyngaarden safely ducked behind the Heckler-to-OSTP study request on April 3 when Senator William Proxmore asked him about the GAO report at NIH's annual appropriations hearing.

Meanwhile, an inquiry on this matter to OSTP produced an expression of puzzlement. The Office's normally well-informed public spokesman told SGR that he knew of no such study. Asked to take another look, he returned with the message that Mrs. Heckler's letter had indeed arrived, and that "we have had discussions" with HHS, "but no study is underway." What is going on?

Though it is the consensus in the lofty echelons of the Administration's science-policy crowd that some of the administrators of academe are flirting with larcency in their abuse of indirect-costs, there is no inclination to inflame the issue. The reason is that the Washington-based university lobbyies—hired by and working for the adminstrations raking off the indirect loot—maintain a hair-trigger alert on this issue. When Wyngaarden, fresh from academe, raised the issue after becoming NIH Director in 1982, he was perceived as the skunk at the banquet. His attempt to trim indirect-cost reimbursements was walloped by the lobbyists of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Association of American Universities.

Wyngaarden finally gave up, as did his compatriot on this issue, White House Science Adviser George A. Keyworth II. Ever on the lookout for the bright side of things, the ebullient Keyworth concluded that the bookkeeping might not bear examination and, in an ideal world, the money might be better spent, but the rakeoff was more or less in harmony with the Reagan Administration's commitment to help universities.

As for Mrs. Heckler, she's got an eye on the Massachusetts Senate seat that Paul Tsongas is vacating for health reasons. And it doesn't help to have university management mad at you if you're running for statewide office there.

What is notable about the Science Office of the Reagan Administration is that many issues go into it, and many of those never come out. It is a perfect repository for the issue of indirect costs.

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